

Security Information

6 February 1953

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Condensation of [REDACTED]

*from the Lewis study*

There is evidence of at least four potential friction and division elements in the USSR. They are:

1. Rivalries between personalities—for power, for Stalin's favor, and because of personality conflicts.
2. Differing economic theories on the proper division of production between capital, consumers and military goods, on pros and cons of trading with foreigners, and on other economic questions.
3. Conflict between Old Bolsheviks and new. Many of the old have had normal contacts with foreign countries and are not as anti-US or as isolationist as the new. At present, the most likely successors to Stalin are Molotov (Old Bolshevik) and Malenkov and Beria (New). No one of them can succeed to the leadership without the support of one other, yet one expert says, "The Old Bolsheviks will hang together; they will never submit to leadership by the New."
4. Some elements of the Army. The Communist Party has not been wholly successful in making the armed forces politically reliable. Many soldiers are of peasant origin; many officers are devoted only to Russia, not to Communism. The Army does not symbolize repression to the Russian people and is not feared or distrusted by them. There is evidence that the Soviet rulers distrust the Army's reliability, as evidenced by the purges of high officers,

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the heavy loading of political commissars and informers through the ranks and the reported highly-armed Secret Army within the Army. It is an axiom that the armed forces are the ultimate key to the power and survival of a dictatorship. The Soviet Army's special position and character may be of great significance when Stalin dies.

There may be other issues—whether to risk war to expand Communism, for example—on which Soviet leaders doubtless disagree, but lack of reliable intelligence on them makes discussion pure speculation.

When Stalin dies, there will be dissatisfaction and tension, but the Presidium, knowing the risks of revealing such dissension, will probably hold together and effect an orderly transfer of power, at least initially. The nature of Stalin's dictatorship, however, indicates the probability of an eventual struggle for power between Molotov, Beria, Malenkov and possibly Bulganin.

A Presidium struggle would offer the U. S. the opportunity to (1) attempt to widen the split; (2) use the split to incite a second schism in the Russian population or the military, for example; (3) aggravate the internal crisis by precipitating an external one—perhaps in the UN or in a satellite area.

Any plan to exploit the death of Stalin in the U. S. interest would have to be a day-to-day, flexible plan and would require taking the calculated risk that U. S. action might unify the very elements we were trying to split. Execution of a plan would require continuous collection of information about USSR leaders and the establishment of effective covert channels of communication with and within the USSR.

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1. Recognize Stalin's death as a news event without the customary condolences but with comment that it marks the end of a dictatorship compared to which the Czar's seems mild. Disseminate this view by a Presidential speech, pronouncement in the UN, and by VOA, RFE and other available means.

2. Express ~~our~~ regret—that Stalin never visited any democracy so never knew the truth about them—and go on to the feelings of the American people toward the Russian people.

3. In a high-level speech, emphasize that Stalin's death is Russia's hour of decision. She is great and strong, and can take this opportunity to lift the Iron Curtain and join the world in a campaign for peace.

4. In a high-level pronouncement, indicate that the U. S. wants peace and is ready and waiting for Russia's answer.

U. S. aims seem to be irreconcilably opposed to Malenkov's and Beria's—Stalin's likely successors. It follows that U. S. political warfare must therefore aim first at destroying the power of Malenkov and Beria. This effort can start now, before Stalin dies. The best means

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covert means. Unless some carefully planned and sustained actions are taken the death of Stalin cannot react, except by sheer accident, in the interest of the U. S.

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